

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 20, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, the Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We write to urge you to move with urgency to eliminate the threat of a government shutdown as we approach the end of the fiscal year. With mere weeks before American taxpayers lose access to vital benefits and services, the time has come to end partisan posturing and put forward a viable path to funding our government. To that end, we stand ready to support a bipartisan funding vehicle free of poison-pill policy riders that is consistent with the agreement you struck with President Biden and which was ratified by bipartisan majorities in both the House and Senate. Let us be clear: if you choose not to pass a bipartisan government funding bill consistent with the Fiscal Responsibility Act, you are deliberately choosing to shut down the government.

Although our views differed on whether these compromises should have been made at all simply to raise the debt ceiling, the funding levels agreed to in the bipartisan debt ceiling agreement were the result of significant compromises by Democrats just to maintain the full faith and credit of the United States. These compromises included frozen funding levels for essential domestic programs that fail to keep up with inflation; rescissions of vital IRS funds dedicated to cracking down on tax evasion by wealthy individuals and large corporations; cuts to funding to address COVID-19; the authorization of new fossil fuel infrastructure; and new and onerous red tape that deprives older Americans from accessing modest Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.

Regardless of such disagreements, the framework passed both chambers of Congress, was signed by the President, and was enacted into law. A deal is a deal, Mr. Speaker, and we urge you to uphold your side of the agreement rather than continuing to expose yourself as an unreliable negotiator and governing partner.

At this late date, the only path forward is to deliver on the deal you struck in June, which was supported by two-thirds of your conference. We can look to the Senate for an example, where Senators achieved bipartisan consensus on funding and policy for all 12 of its appropriations bills. In contrast, your House majority has been unable to pass the vast majority of its own hyper-partisan appropriations bills, despite the inclusion of extreme policy riders and draconian spending cuts designed to accommodate the far-right faction of your conference. This approach, appropriating well below the Fiscal Responsibility Act levels while attaching far-right policies to these bills, violates the bipartisan framework already enacted into law.

Republican-written House appropriations bills would impose an \$800 million cut to food benefits for low-income mothers and children, kick 224,000 teachers from classrooms, and eliminate access to early childhood education for 51,000 children in Head Start, all while limiting access to abortion. The

Republican-written House appropriations bills would impose an \$800 million cut to food benefits for low-income mothers and children, kick 224,000 teachers from classrooms, and eliminate access to early childhood education for 51,000 children in Head Start, all while limiting access to abortion. The American people cannot afford further cuts to the programs they rely on for health, nutrition, education, transportation, housing, safety, and much more. It is time to follow the lead of the Senate and pass a bipartisan funding vehicle.

Some in your conference have been openly publicly threatening a government shutdown, telling Americans that “[we should not fear a government shutdown](#).” The American people know better. A government shutdown will impact the very things families desperately need: the risk of running out of SNAP and TANF benefits, limited access to beneficiary assistance for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, curtailed food and environmental safety inspections, weakened disease surveillance, treatment and prevention efforts, and the potential of no back pay for low-wage federal contract workers. [Seventy-seven percent of voters](#) also believe we should avoid a shutdown because it harms the economy. If this House majority decides to shut down the government by insisting on unpopular cuts to investments that help our country flourish and extreme policy riders that target the most vulnerable Americans, they will hold you accountable.

Government shutdowns never end well for the party responsible for the shutdown, and Republicans will be held responsible if you pursue any path other than a spending agreement based on the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023. We stand ready to work with you to follow the lead of the Senate, pass a bipartisan funding vehicle consistent with the Fiscal Responsibility Act, and avoid a government shutdown.

Sincerely,



Pramila Jayapal  
Chair  
Congressional Progressive  
Caucus



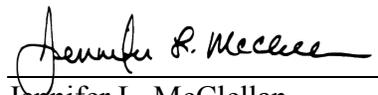
Ilhan Omar  
Deputy Chair  
Congressional Progressive  
Caucus



Greg Casar  
Whip  
Congressional Progressive  
Caucus



Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



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Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



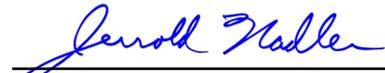
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JM Tokuda  
Member of Congress



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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



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Terrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



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Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



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Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



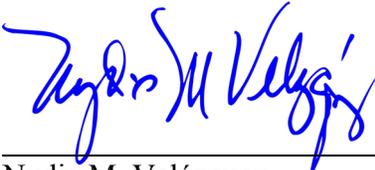
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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



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Maxine Waters  
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Katie Porter  
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André Carson  
Member of Congress



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Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress



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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Andrea Salinas  
Member of Congress



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Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



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Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



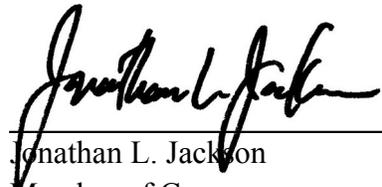
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Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress



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Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



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Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragan  
Member of Congress



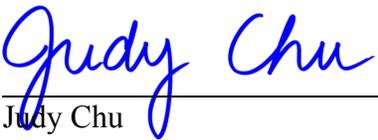
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Sara Jacobs  
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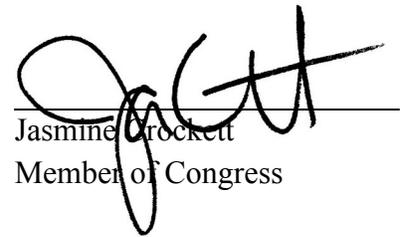
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Valerie P. Foushee  
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Troy Carter  
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Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



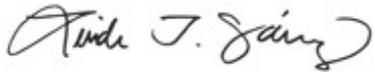
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Ted W. Lieu  
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Member of Congress



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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



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Sydney Kamlager Dove  
Member of Congress



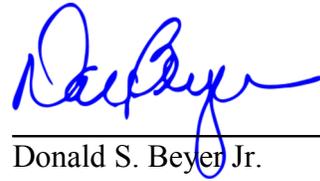
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress



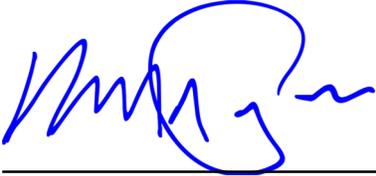
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Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



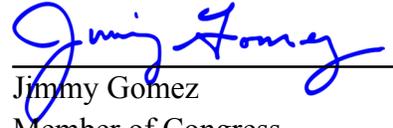
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



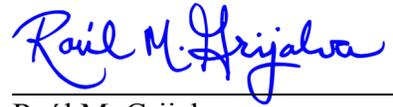
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Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



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Steve Cohen  
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Member of Congress



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Shontel M. Brown  
Member of Congress



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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



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Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



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Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



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Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



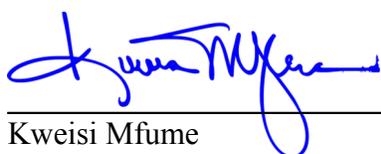
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Summer Lee  
Member of Congress



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Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



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Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress



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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress



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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



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John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



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Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



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Matt Cartwright  
Member of Congress



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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress



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Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



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Andy Kim  
Member of Congress



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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Teresa Leger Fernández  
Member of Congress



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Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

CC: House Majority Leader Scalise, Democratic Leader Jeffries, Democratic Whip Clark, Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Senate Minority Leader McConnell